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State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196
401-222-2080

LINCOLN ALMOND
GOVERNOR

December 26, 2001

Mr. Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Powell:

I am writing to urge your department to give due consideration to the proposed merger between Echostar Communications Corporation and Hughes Electronics Corporation (DIRECTV).

Proponents of the merger believe that it would represent the next step in the development of healthy competition between the cable and satellite industries. It could also hasten the availability of Internet broadband access for rural consumers - something that policymakers at all levels believe would be positive for the economy.

Opponents of the merger raise antitrust issues and these should be carefully considered. The cable industry, however, has a monopoly presence in many areas.

The people of Rhode Island have benefited from the introduction of satellite service and will continue to benefit from even more robust competition between the cable and satellite industries. It is my hope your department will promptly and thoroughly review this merger and give it every consideration.

Sincerely,

Lincoln Almond

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

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